



Congressman Tim Bishop

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BISHOP OFFERS AMENDMENT TO OFFER SCHOOLS FLEXIBILITY TO KEEP QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Would Allow School Districts to Offer Affordable Housing Incentives

Washington, DC— Congressman Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) offered an amendment today to increase healthcare benefits for many Americans. In debate on the Small Business Health Fairness Act (HR 660), Bishop proposed that employers who benefit from Association Health Plans (AHPs) should extend coverage to their employees.

Bishop also presented his concern that not only could HR 660 not result in additional coverage for Americans, but it could decrease the level of coverage for millions of Americans by superceding state law. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the bill The negative aspects of AHPs especially effect small business employees. In the case of small businesses, often the employers do not offer any insurance, or the little they offer comes with a prohibitive cost to the employee.

“Not only does this bill fail to provide improve healthcare coverage, but it would undermine existing consumer protections provided by state laws,” Bishop said.

The bill intends to rid the AHPs of much needed state oversight. By making the oversight a federal responsibility it would create an environment of abuse and fraud. State protection of health insurance allows for patient protection laws, financial solvency standards and small employer health insurance reform. The amendment seeks to end the practice of AHPs, which pick the healthiest people to give reductions to, and saves money by ridding the insurance of state intervention.

Bishop’s remarks on his amendment came at the markup of HR660, the Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2003, in the Education and the Workforce Committee. Unfortunately the amendment failed along partisan lines, however Bishop hopes to continue fighting for this issue that he deems as a top priority.

“In my opinion we must take real steps now to bring security to our families by closing the gap on the uninsured.....I do not believe that HR660 provides a workable solution that would extend health insurance coverage to a significant number of Americans.” Bishop said.

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